

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DAMASC 02978 050617Z

11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SCCT-01 /059 W

----- 079295

R 050542Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4165

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2978

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SY

SUBJ: EXECUTION OF ARAB COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION (ACO) MEMBERS

REF: DAMASCUS 2935

1. DATT MET 2 AUGUST WITH FOREIGN LIASION OFFICER, COL TAL'AT JAMIL, WHO WAS MEMBER OF FIVE MEMBER STATE SECURITY COURT WHICH TRIED ACO MEMBERS. CONVERSATIONS INEVITABLY TURNED TO EXECUTIONS WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE SIX HOURS EARLIER. DATT ASKED TAL'AT IF HE WAS HAVING ANY PSYCHOLOGICAL REPERCUSSIONS. HIS ANSWER WAS THAT HE HAD NO RESERVATIONS OR MISGIVINGS ABOUT VERDICT OR SENTENCES AND INDICATED CONSIDERABLE PRIDE IN HIS ROLE IN THE AFFAIR. WHEN DATT SAID THAT EXECUTIONS HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT WITH UNUSUAL SPEED, TAL'AT REPLIED THAT THE "NATIONAL SECURITY" REQUIRED FAST ACTION AND NOW "WAS NOT THE TIME" FOR REGIME TO VACILLATE OR BE INDECISIVE. HE SAID IF THE PLOTTERS HAD BEEN ORDINARY MURDERERS OR CRIMINALS IT MIGHT HAVE TAKEN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DAMASC 02978 050617Z

THREE YEARS FOR THE SYRIAN LEGAL SYSTEM TO DEFINITELY

DECIDE THEIR FATE. HOWEVER THIS CASE WAS DIFFERENT.
THE STATE SECURITY COURT WAS THE HIGHEST TRIBUNAL POSSIBLE.
THERE WAS NO APPEAL FROM ITS DECISIONS; AND THE NATURE OF
THE OFFENSES DEMANDED THE STATE DEMONSTRATE ITS AUTHORITY
AND POWER IN IMMEDIATE FASHION.

2. WHILE THE ACO OPERATIONS WERE UNDOUBTEDLY EMBARRASSING,
TO THIS REGIME, THEY WERE NOT, IN AND OF THEMSELVES, A
SIGNIFICANT THREAT. CLEARLY THE EXPEDITIOUS TRIAL AND
PROMPT EXECUTIONS WERE DESIGNED AS AN UNMISTAKABLE
WARNING TO POSSIBLE PLOTTERS AND OTHER MALCONTENTS.
CONSIDERING CURRENT SYRIAN OBSESSION WITH IRAQ, IT IS
OBVIOUS THAT SENTENCES WERE NOT SO MUCH IMPOSED FOR THE
MISDEEDS OF A YOUTHFUL BAND OF PETTY TERRORISTS, BUT TO
DETER IRAQI SYMPATHIZERS AND/OR OTHER GROUPS WHO MIGHT
CONSTITUTE A STRONGER THREAT TO THE REGIME'S LONGEVITY.

3. IT SHOULD ALSO BE REMEMBERED WHO THESE PEOPLE ARE
WHO RUN SYRIA. WHILE PURSUING RELATIVELY ENLIGHTENED
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES, THEY ARE THE SURVIVORS OF
TWENTY YEARS OF BRUTAL, SOMETIMES VIOLENT, NO HOLDS
BARRED COMPETITION FOR POWER. TIME AND AGAIN THEY HAVE
SEEN WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THOSE WHO WERE CARELESS, WEAK
OR INDECISIVE. POLITICAL FAILURE HERE DOES NOT MEAN
LOSING AN ELECTION; IT MEANS LOSING YOUR OWN FREEDOM OR
PERHAPS YOUR LIFE.
MURPHY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COURT DECISIONS, TERRORISTS, COMMUNIST FRONT ORGANIZATIONS, EXECUTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975DAMASC02978
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750269-0503
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750879/aaaacrhn.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 DAMASCUS 2935
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 AUG 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <28 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EXECUTION OF ARAB COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION (ACO) MEMBERS
TAGS: PINS, SY, ACO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006